



EPA Office of Prevention, Pesticides, and Toxic Substances

**How To Comply with the Worker Protection Standard
for Agricultural Pesticides: What Employers Need to Know
Unit 4, Part C: Early Entry**

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PART C

EARLY ENTRY

The WPS allows entry into a treated area that remains under a restricted-entry interval only in a few narrow work situations. When early entry is permitted under the WPS, special protections must be given to the early-entry workers. This subsection describes those work situations and protections.

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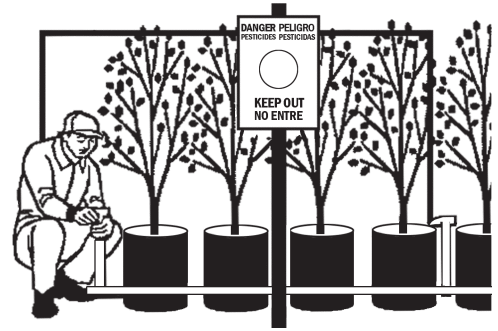
EARLY-ENTRY WORK SITUATIONS

BASIC RESPONSIBILITIES

(See Also Specific Duties Section Below)

Worker employers must not allow their **workers** to enter treated areas where they will contact treated surfaces, except in a few very limited work situations.

Worker employers must provide special protections to any of their **workers** who do early-entry tasks involving contact with anything that has been treated with a pesticide, including soil, water, air, and surfaces of plants.



SPECIFIC DUTIES

Early entry involving contact with treated surfaces is permitted in only four work situations:

- **short-term tasks** that last less than 1 hour and do not involve hand labor,
- **limited-contact tasks** that could not have been foreseen, cannot be delayed, and do not involve hand labor,
- **emergency tasks** that take place because of an agricultural emergency, and
- **specific tasks** approved by EPA through a formal exception process.

Short-term Tasks With No Hand Labor

Workers may enter treated areas before the restricted-entry interval is over to do short-term jobs that do not involve hand labor, if provided with the protections and PPE required for early entry. Each worker must:

- Wait at least 4 hours after the pesticide application is completed before entering the treated area, *and*
- Wait at least until any inhalation exposure level listed on the product labeling has been reached or any WPS ventilation criteria have been met, *and*
- Spend no more than 1 hour in a 24-hour period on short-term early-entry tasks.

Hand Labor

Any agricultural activity performed by hand, or with hand tools, that might cause a worker to have substantial contact with surfaces (such as plants, plant parts, or soil) that may contain pesticide residues.

Examples of hand labor tasks include: harvesting, detasseling, thinning, weeding, topping, planting, girdling, caning, sucker removal, pruning, disbudding, roguing, and packing produce into containers in the field.

Limited-Contact Tasks

Tasks where early-entry workers' only contact with treated surfaces — including soil, water, surfaces of plants, crops, and irrigation equipment — is minimal and is limited to their feet, lower legs, hands, and forearms. Hand labor tasks are not limited-contact tasks.

Examples of limited-contact tasks include operating, moving, or repairing irrigation or watering equipment; operating or repairing weather monitoring and frost protection equipment; repairing greenhouse heating, air conditioning, and ventilation equipment; repairing non-application field equipment; maintaining and moving beehives.

Only appropriately trained and equipped pesticide handlers may operate, move, or repair the parts of chemigation equipment that may contain pesticide residues. Chemigation equipment is equipment used to apply pesticides with irrigation water.

Employers should make every effort to schedule pesticide applications and worker tasks in a way that will avoid the necessity of early entry of workers into treated areas.

For additional protections that must be provided to workers who do short-term early-entry tasks, see pages 52-56.

For additional protections that must be provided to workers who do limited-contact early-entry tasks, see pages 52-56.

Could not have been foreseen means that when you made the pesticide application, you could not have anticipated the circumstances that led to the need to perform limited-contact tasks. For example, you do not qualify if you knew that you would need to enter the treated area to perform routine watering during the restricted-entry interval.

Limited-Contact Tasks That Could Not Have Been Foreseen, Cannot Be Delayed, and Involve No Hand Labor

Early-entry workers may enter treated areas to do limited-contact tasks before the restricted-entry interval is over, provided **all the following conditions are met**:

- the early-entry tasks do **not** involve hand labor (see definition in the shaded box on p. 47), **and**
- the early-entry tasks will not cause workers to have more than minimal contact with treated surfaces, **and**
- contact with treated surfaces will be limited to the workers' feet, lower legs, hands, and forearms, **and**
- the need for the early-entry could not have been foreseen, **and**
- if the early-entry tasks are delayed, the delay would cause significant economic loss, and there are no alternative practices that would prevent the loss, **and**
- the pesticide product's Agricultural Use Requirement box does **not** contain the following "double notification" statement: "Notify workers of the application by warning them orally and by posting warning signs at entrances to treated area," **and**
- the pesticide product does **not** contain a restriction prohibiting any person, other than an appropriately trained and equipped handler, from entering during the restricted-entry interval.

You must provide each limited-contact early-entry worker with:

- either the personal protective equipment required on the pesticide labeling for early entry into treated areas *or* a standard set of PPE consisting of coveralls, chemical-resistant gloves, chemical-resistant footwear, and protective eyewear (and make sure the worker wears socks) **and**

Note: You may eliminate the protective eyewear from the standard set of PPE in any treated area where the pesticide label does not require it for early entry.

- all the protections required for early-entry workers (see p. 56), **and**
- oral or written notification, in a language that the workers can understand, that:
 - the establishment is relying on this exception to allow workers to enter treated areas to complete limited-contact tasks,
 - no entry is allowed for the first 4 hours after an application, and until applicable ventilation criteria have been met, and until any label-specified inhalation exposure level has been reached,
 - the time the worker spends in any treated area where a restricted-entry interval is in effect cannot exceed 8 hours in any 24-hour period.

You must make sure that each limited-contact early-entry worker:

- waits at least 4 hours after the pesticide application is completed before entering the treated area, **and**
- waits at least until any inhalation exposure level listed on the product labeling has been reached or any WPS ventilation criteria have been met, **and**
- spends no more than 8 hours in a 24-hour period on limited-contact early-entry tasks.

Tasks During An Agricultural Emergency

Early-entry workers may enter treated areas before the restricted-entry interval is over to do tasks that are necessary because of an agricultural emergency, if provided with the protections and PPE required for early entry. Each worker must:

- do only those tasks relating to mitigating the emergency, *and*
- wait at least 4 hours after the pesticide application is completed before entering the treated area, *and*
- wait at least until any inhalation exposure level listed on the product labeling has been reached or any WPS ventilation criteria have been met.

For additional protections that must be provided to early-entry workers, see pp. 52-56.

1. Declaring a Potential Agricultural Emergency

A state, tribal, or federal agency having jurisdiction must declare that circumstances exist, have occurred, or are forecast that might cause an agricultural emergency where your establishment is located. Such circumstances may include, for example, flooding, hail, high winds, hurricane, tornado, freeze, or frost.

2. Agricultural Emergency on Your Establishment

Once such an agency has declared that circumstances might cause (or might already have caused) an agricultural emergency in your area, you must decide if an agricultural emergency actually exists for any treated areas on your establishment that remain under a restricted-entry interval. **All of the following conditions must be met** before you may let workers go into a treated area where a restricted-entry interval is in effect:

- You could not have anticipated the circumstances that led to the emergency when you made the pesticide application. For example, you do not qualify if weather forecasts **before** the application warned you that the emergency was imminent.
- You had no control over the circumstances that led to the emergency. For example, you do not qualify if you forgot to heat your greenhouse or over-watered with an irrigation system.
- Early entry is the only practice that will prevent or reduce a substantial economic loss involving the crop in that treated area. For example, you do not qualify if you have access to mechanical harvesting equipment that could harvest your crop in lieu of hand-harvesting.
- If early entry does not occur, the loss of profit will be greater than the loss that would be expected on the basis of experience and the variation in crop yields in previous years. The contribution of mismanagement cannot be considered in determining the loss.

EPA-Approved Exceptions

EPA has established a formal regulatory process for considering additional exceptions to the restrictions on entering treated areas during an REI. If any such exceptions are approved, EPA will publish them in the Federal Register and intends to inform state and tribal pesticide agencies, the Cooperative Extension Service, affected commodity, industry, and worker associations, and other interested parties. Check with them or the EPA office in your region for an updated list of approved exceptions and for information about the requirements and limitations of those exceptions.

Summary of Early Entry Requirements				
WPS Provision or Requirement	Type of Early Entry			
	No Contact (see p. 37)	Short-Term (see p. 47)	Limited Contact (see p. 48)	Agricultural Emergency (see p. 49)
Entry during application (entry by workers during application is never acceptable)	no entry	no entry	no entry	no entry
Entry before inhalation exposure level or ventilation criteria have been met	no entry	no entry	no entry	no entry
Entry during first 4 hours after application is complete	entry permitted	no entry	no entry	no entry
Need for early entry could have been anticipated	entry permitted	entry permitted	no entry	no entry
Need for early entry could not have been anticipated	entry permitted	entry permitted	entry permitted (if other triggers are met, see p. 48)	entry permitted (if other triggers are met, see p. 49)
Entry is not an economic necessity	entry permitted	entry permitted	no entry	no entry
Entry is an economic necessity	entry permitted	entry permitted	entry permitted (if other triggers are met, see p. 48)	entry permitted (if other triggers are met, see p. 49)
Hours of entry permitted per day	no limit	1 hour	8 hours	no limit
Hand labor tasks permitted?	yes	no	no	yes
Pesticide safety training (worker) provided?	yes	yes (no 5-day grace period)	yes (no 5-day grace period)	yes (no 5-day grace period)
Information at central location provided?	yes	yes	yes	yes
Emergency assistance provided?	yes	yes	yes	yes
Notice about applications provided?	yes	yes	yes	yes
Restrictions during applications in effect?	yes	yes	yes	yes
Instructions related to personal protective equipment provided?	no	yes	yes	yes

Summary of Early Entry Requirements (Cont.)				
WPS Provision or Requirement	Type of Early Entry			
	No Contact (see p. 37)	Short-Term (see p. 47)	Limited Contact (see p. 48)	Agricultural Emergency (see p. 49)
Labeling information and instructions provided?	no	yes	yes	yes
Early entry decontamination supplies provided?	no	yes	yes	yes
Personal protective equipment provided, cleaned, and maintained?	no	yes	yes	yes

GENERAL PROTECTIONS FOR EARLY-ENTRY WORKERS

BASIC RESPONSIBILITIES

(See Also Specific Duties Section Below)

Worker employers must provide several types of protections, described below, to their **early-entry workers** who contact anything that has been treated with a pesticide, including soil, water, air, and surfaces of plants.



SPECIFIC DUTIES

Protections Required By the Pesticide Labeling

Provide any protections required by the pesticide labeling for early-entry tasks.

Required Protections That Are the Same As For Other Workers

Provide protections that are required for all agricultural workers:

- Information at a central location (p. 19),
- Emergency assistance (p. 27),
- Restrictions during applications (p. 36), and
- Notice about applications (p. 33).

Special Protections For Early-entry Workers

A few WPS requirements for early-entry workers differ from those for other agricultural workers. Provide special protections to early-entry workers in the following areas:

- Training and instructions,
- Decontamination supplies, and
- Personal protective equipment.

These requirements are described in detail in the next several pages.

TRAINING AND INSTRUCTIONS FOR EARLY-ENTRY WORKERS

BASIC RESPONSIBILITIES

(See Also Specific Duties Section Below)

Worker employers must make sure that each of their **early-entry workers** is currently trained as a WPS worker and, in addition, receives specific information and instructions, described below.

SPECIFIC DUTIES

Training

Make sure that each early-entry worker is currently trained as a WPS worker (see requirements on p. 21) **before** entering a treated area on the agricultural establishment during a restricted-entry interval.

The 5-day grace period for training that applies to other agricultural workers does not apply to early-entry workers.

Instructions Related to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Instruct early-entry workers, in a manner they can understand:

- how to put on, use, and take off early-entry PPE correctly,
- about the importance of washing thoroughly after removing PPE, and
- how to prevent, recognize, and give correct first aid for heat illness (too much heat stress). For more information on heat stress, see chart in Appendix B, p 115.

Labeling Information and Instructions

Inform early-entry workers, in a manner they can understand, about the safety information and instructions on the labeling of the pesticide(s) to which the REI applies, including:

- human hazard statements and precautions,
- first aid,
- signs and symptoms of poisoning,
- PPE required for early entry, and
- any other precautions or instructions related to safe use or early entry.

For definitions of PPE, see page 64.

Option: You may allow workers who will do early-entry tasks to read the labeling themselves, if they are able to read and understand it.

DECONTAMINATION SUPPLIES FOR EARLY-ENTRY WORKERS

BASIC RESPONSIBILITIES

(See Also Specific Duties Section Below)

Worker employers must provide their **early-entry workers** with decontamination supplies for washing off pesticides and pesticide residues.

SPECIFIC DUTIES

Supplies

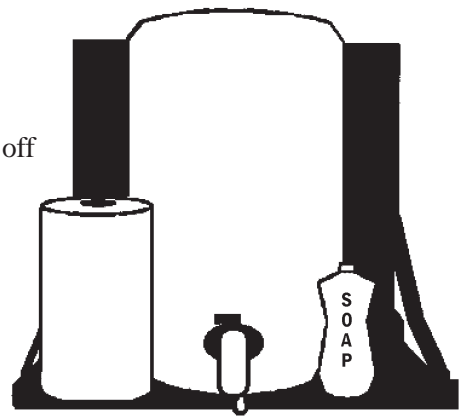
Provide early-entry workers with:

1. Water — enough for:

- routine washing, and
- emergency eyeflushing.

If the water is stored in a tank, the water **must not** be used for mixing pesticides, unless the tank is equipped with correctly functioning antibacksiphoning or check valves or other mechanisms (such as air gaps) that prevent pesticides from moving into the tank.

2. Soap and single use towels — enough for the needs of early-entry workers.



Decontamination and emergency eyeflush water must, at all times when it is available to early-entry workers, be of a quality and temperature that will not cause illness or injury when it contacts the skin or eyes or if it is swallowed.

Recommendation: How Much Water Should Be Provided?

Obviously, running water meets the requirement. However, if it is not available, use the following guidelines.

- **Early-Entry Workers:** At least 1 gallon of water is recommended for each early-entry worker using the supplies. If you find that 1 gallon per early-entry worker is inadequate to last for the entire work period, provide more water or replenish the water as needed during the work period.

Location

Make sure:

1. The decontamination supplies are **not** in an area being treated with pesticides.
2. The decontamination supplies are **not** in an area under a restricted-entry interval, **unless** that location is necessary for the supplies to be reasonably accessible to early-entry workers.
3. The decontamination supplies are reasonably accessible to and not more than 1/4 mile from early-entry workers.

Exception

For tasks performed more than 1/4 mile from the nearest point reachable by vehicle (car, truck, or tractor), the decontamination supplies may be at the access point. In this circumstance, clean water from springs, streams, lakes, or other sources may be used for decontamination if such water is more readily available than the water at the access point.

Emergency Eyeflushing

Provide each early-entry worker with at least 1 pint of emergency eyeflush water when the pesticide labeling requires protective eyewear for early entry. The emergency eyeflush water must be **immediately accessible**. For example, it could be carried by the handler or be on a vehicle the early-entry worker is using. The water that is supplied for general decontamination may also be used as eyeflush water, if it is immediately accessible.

Decontamination at the End of Exposure Period

At the site where early-entry workers take off their PPE, provide :

- soap,
- clean towels, and
- enough water to allow early-entry workers to wash thoroughly after removing their PPE.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT FOR EARLY-ENTRY WORKERS

BASIC RESPONSIBILITIES

(See Also Specific Duties Section Below)

Worker employers must provide their **early-entry workers** with the early-entry PPE required by the pesticide labeling, make sure they wear the PPE, and make sure they use the PPE correctly.

SPECIFIC DUTIES

Duties Related to Personal Protective Equipment

1. Provide the appropriate PPE in clean and operating condition to each early-entry worker.
2. Make sure early-entry workers wear PPE correctly for its intended purpose and use it according to the manufacturer's instructions.
3. Inspect all PPE before each day of use for leaks, holes, tears, or worn places. Repair or discard any damaged equipment.
4. Provide early-entry workers clean places away from pesticide storage and pesticide use areas to:
 - store personal clothing not in use,
 - put on PPE at the start of any exposure period, and
 - take off PPE at the end of any exposure period.
5. Take necessary steps to prevent heat illness (too much heat stress) while PPE is being worn.
6. Do not allow early-entry workers to wear home or take home PPE contaminated with pesticides.

Cleaning and Maintaining PPE

1. Keep pesticide-contaminated PPE separate from other clothing or laundry, and wash it separately.
2. If PPE will be reused, clean it before each day of reuse according to the instructions from the PPE manufacturer, unless the pesticide labeling specifies different requirements. If there are no such instructions or requirements, wash the PPE thoroughly in detergent and hot water.
3. Thoroughly dry the clean PPE before it is stored, or put it in a well-ventilated place to dry.
4. Store clean PPE separately from personal clothing and away from pesticide-contaminated areas.

Disposal of PPE

Comply with any applicable federal, state, tribal, and local regulations when you dispose of PPE that cannot be cleaned correctly.

Instructions for Persons Who Clean PPE

Inform anyone who cleans or launders PPE:

- that PPE may be contaminated with pesticides,
- of the potentially harmful effects of pesticides,
- how to protect themselves when handling contaminated PPE, and
- how to clean PPE correctly.

For more information about laundering pesticide-contaminated clothing, please visit the Worker Protection Standard topic page on the Ag Center's Web site at: <http://www.epa.gov/agriculture/twor.html>

PPE for early-entry activities is listed on the pesticide label in the "Directions for Use" section under the heading "Agricultural Use Requirements."

See PPE definitions, p. 64.

For an example of what to tell people who clean PPE, see pp. 95-96.